

7-30-1861

Arthur McKinstry to Mother

Arthur McKinstry

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Direct them to me. Col. Taylor 3d Regt. Cal.

Write and tell me all
the news - your last came
safely here and I was glad enough
to get it. Washington July 30th 1861

Dear Mother,

Having got a very
little leisure I improve it by
writing again to you. I got here last
Friday but have been very busy
or else very tired ever since. To
be sure I felt in duty bound to
send one letter to Uncle Willard for
the paper and that you can get
from Uncle Sabin, that is if he
ever got it. We expect to be paid
at least one months wages pretty
soon - our pay roll is made out
at least. I suffered very much
from shingles during the last
part of my stay at Camp Scott.
Now however I am in splendid
health and spirits and can
stand as hard a days drill as
the next man. We are quartered

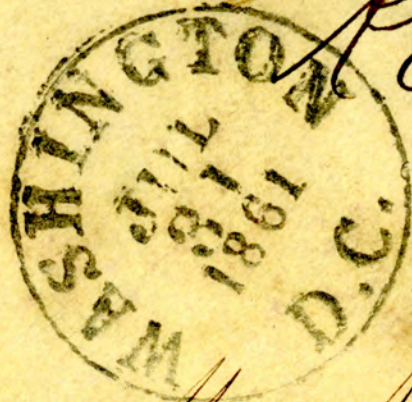
upon a hill about a mile north
of the Capitol and upon the
southern slope of a hill which
commands a view of that and of
most of the city. I learn from the
men who returned from Bull
run that the southerners could
not begin to stand a northern
bayonet charge, that a portion
of our man was out of ammunition
and that Gen McDowell disobeyed
his orders which were not to engage
until the following day. If he
had obeyed orders he would
have had support enough on the
ensuing day to have crushed down
all opposition. As regards the result
the southerners won the victory it
is true but their loss was far
heavier than ours - the men who
were there say that their ^{southern} dead
were piled upon the batteries by
the hundred. Ellsworth's son was

unmolested he formed Black
Horse of Virginia. This corps was the
"creme de la creme" of the C. F. V.
and they fired upon the gonaves and
charged. The gonaves dropped to all
appearance dead. The cavalry then
turned upon the 27th N.Y. when the
gonaves jumped nimbly up and
fired - charged - and but six of
the cavalry remained to tell the
tale. These also I believe were taken
prisoners. Even the enemy were
forced to admit that their
loss was double ours, at the least.
Our men fell back when tired
by the severest labor and our
numbered four to one by
perfectly fresh troops beside the
army they had routed. It was
all McDowell's fault. We have now
within 5 to six miles of here at
least 15,000 men who can
take the field at an hours call

Mr. Clellan or perhaps Scott himself
will head the next advance. It may
take place in a month, or within
an hour. We have the old muskets
yet but all who have gone over
the border lately have taken minies
with them and left their muskets.
Before we go into action our officers
must be examined by a board
to see if they know their duty.
Ours will stand it but I should
not wonder if our company should
furnish some for others who have
not good drill master. Well I must
fall in for roll call pretty soon.
I am stout as need be. I think
I may get over into the city in a
day or so - to morrow perhaps.

The climate is very fine though
rather hot and agrees with me better
than Chaut. Co. I wrote to Aunt Eliza
and got a letter from her, all well.

Love to all and I will soon write
further. make Frank write and fill out
the sheet - my regards to P. & K. and Nelson
Generally either at work or resting. Arthur.



8
P. Austin
me

Mrs Austin Chapin
Forestville
Chant. Co.
N.Y.

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